ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

www.marp.org marprail@yahoo.com

Issue # 115 **May 2022**

The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation established in 1973 to improve passenger train service, travel conditions for passengers, and to work for the preservation of historic rail stations.

Monthly meetings are held at locations around the state. Check the website for dates and venues. The public is invited to attend.

MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2020-2022

John Guidinger	*Chair*
Steve Vagnozzi	*Vice-Chair*
Jeanie Merckel	*Treasurer*
Larry Krieg	*Secretary*
Steve Vagnozzi	*Gov't/Public Affairs Coordinator*
Chuck Merckel	*Meetings Coordinator*
Robert Patterson	*Detroit/Metro Region Chair*
Todd Schultz	*West Region Chair*
Clark Charnetski	*At-Large*
Carolyn Ulstad	*At-Large*

Webmaster, Larry Sobczak
ON TRACK Editor & Communications, Kay Chase

2022 MEETINGS

20 January – Member Meeting
Legacy of the Pullman Porters

03 March – Member Meeting
Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Assoc.

April – No Member Meeting

May – No Member Meeting

09 June – Member Meeting
Paul Trap, Early Michigan Railroading

July – Member Meeting
TBA

September – Member Meeting
TBA

49th Annual Meeting
TBA

Visit www.marp.org
Email marprail@yahoo.com

MI Healthy Climate Plan Gives Short Shrift to Rail

The **MI Healthy Climate Plan**, released by Governor Whitmer during an April 21st Earth Day event at a solar array near Traverse City, is the product of more than a year of study and deliberation by the **Council on Climate Solutions** and **six associated Workgroups**, each of which was charged with coming up with recommendations for inclusion in the final Plan.

Transportation & Mobility was the focus of one of the six Workgroups This Workgroup was co-chaired by Charles Griffith of the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor and Judson Herzer, Office of Future Mobility and Electrification in the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). Others participating in the deliberations included Charlotte Jameson of the Michigan Environmental Council (MEC) and Megan Owens of Transportation Riders United (TRU). The group's **recommendations are presented in a 62-page document** that is well worth reading though woefully inadequate in acknowledging the potential for transit and passenger trains to help in meeting climate goals.

Predictably, perhaps, the development and deployment of electric-vehicles (EVs) dominated much of the discussion of how to address harmful emissions from the transportation sector, the sector that is now the largest single contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It is recognized, however, that an all-electric vehicle future is decades away and that more must be done to expand access to public transit and bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly ways of getting around. Significantly, passenger trains are mentioned in the Workgroup's recommendations only as an interim strategy, along with transit and bicycle amenities, for migrating the failure to meet GHG reduction goals.

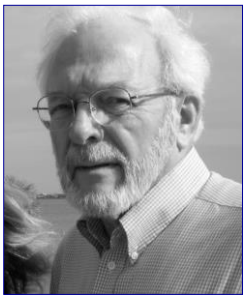
One of the most forward-looking—and most contentious— recommendations put forward by the Transportation Workgroup is that MDOT, and regional and local road agencies, should incorporate GHG budgets [greenhouse gas budgets] into their planning. (*See* **page 24** *of the Transportation Workgroup's recommendations.)* Agencies would risk losing project funding if they failed to "prioritiz[e] projects that will achieve the needed GHG reductions [and also] show that their plans do comply."

(***CLIMATE*** *continues on page 2*)

MARP 2022 Meeting Schedule

Due to ongoing concerns with COVID-19, MARP will continue to meet online using Zoom. See page 2 for details of the June 9 meeting. The Executive Committee meets via Zoom on the third Wednesday of the month. If you have ideas to contribute, questions, or concerns please send them to us at **marprail@yahoo.com**. If you would like to sit in on a meeting, please contact MARP Chair John Guidinger at **jhguidinger1@yahoo.com**.

June Member Meeting to Feature Speaker on Early Railroading in Michigan



Everything including railroads has a beginning including railroads in Michigan. Paul Trap, teacher and railroad historian, will describe why Michigan needed railroads and how the state and private individuals struggled and schemed to meet that need prior to the Civil War.

Please plan to join us on Zoom at 5:00 PM Eastern, 09 June 2022.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83566660840?pwd=d2ZqMFI2K0k2TlRoSldWbWVLamlNUT09

(***CLIMATE*** *continued from page 1*)

This recommendation did not make it into the final plan. Some members of the Workgroup reported significant pushback whenever the discussion of reducing the amount of driving Michiganders do.

During two public **listening sessions** in December 2021, designed to solicit ideas from residents prior to submitting final recommendations, some specific themes emerged as major concerns of the wider public. While eliminating the internal combustion engine is recognized as essential to a carbon neutral future, many spoke of the need to give people the option of driving less. Better pedestrian and bicycle facilities are viewed as essential components of an active lifestyle that has health benefits for individuals as well as for the planet. Social equity issues are a concern: many people do not now have—and will not in the future have—access to an automobile. Several respondents mentioned the need to expand passenger train service as a more energy efficient way of moving around the state. (*It is notable that the word "train" does not occur in the final plan at all; in the Workgroup recommendations, it occurs in a footnote and as a possible element in mitigating failures to meet emission reduction targets*.)

So what did make it into the final Plan as regards transportation? The development and deployment of electric vehicles is the primary strategy, along with the adoption of a clean fuels standard. Importantly, the Plan calls for expanding access to clean transportation options—transit, bicycle paths, and pedestrian facilities—by 15 percent each year. The Plan also calls for the elimination of fatal and serious injuries for all road users. (*See* **page 39**.)

The **MI Healthy Climate Plan** was set in motion by **an executive directive** establishing the **Council on Climate Solutions** and charging it with submitting a plan to put Michigan on a path to carbon-neutrality by 2050. The Council is comprised of heads of nine state departments and agencies plus fourteen members appointed by the Governor and representing a variety of industry, business, academic and public interest groups. The major spadework was done by the above- mentioned Workgroups drawing on a wide

(***CLIMATE*** *continues at right*)

(***CLIMATE*** *continued from left)*

variety of expertise. Additional input was gathered from the public in a well-attended **series of "virtual" meetings**. The comprehensive reports issued by each of the Workgroups gathered extensive background material and should continue to serve as critical resources as the State moves forward with implementation. It is worth noting that not all the recommendations made by the Workgroups made it into the final Plan, thus reinforcing the idea that these documents should continue to be available for consultation.

Reactions to the Plan have been generally positive. The Ecology Center **has highlighted major points**. Our friends at TRU and MEC suggest we **write to Governor Whitmer** expressing appreciation for this important initiative, but pointing out that the transportation and mobility recommendations fall short. The Plan should be stronger in aggressively expanding access to clean and affordable mobility options: intercity trains and buses, local transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Ensuring that this does not become just another plan that sits on the shelf will require that all of us at the "grassroots" remain vigilant and steadfast. We are the ones who can put into office decision makers who see the necessity of addressing the climate crisis and the courage to do what it takes to get the job done. ALERT: 2022 is an election year!

You may **read short summaries here** of the recommendations made by each of the Workgroups. Click on the links below to read the complete recommendations of each of the Workgroups.

MI HEALTHY CLIMATE PLAN DOCUMENTS

Transportation & Mobility

Buildings & Housing

Energy Intensive Industries

Energy Production

Natural Working Lands & Forest Products

Materials Decarbonization

Read the complete plan here
MI Healthy Climate Plan

Michigan Rail Conference 2022
Early Bird Registration Open Now

Celebrating its 10th year, the **Michigan Rail Conference** returns to the Upper Peninsula. Convening at Bay College in Escanaba, the conference opens with the traditional **Student Scholarship Golf Outing** and reception on August 1, continues with the **main program** on August 2, and winds up with **field visits** on August 3.

Take a look at **the draft program** (complete but for confirmation of a speaker or two) to see the variety of topics that will be covered. Highlights include:

- Peter Anastor (MDOT Office of Rail) will join Rick Harnish (High Speed Rail Alliance) and Brian Buchanan from WATCO to give us a Michigan update.
- Discussing next steps for PTC will be Amtrak's Chris Jagodzinski, along with John Rickoff (Lake State Railway) and Rachel Klumpp (Canadian National).
- Surface Transportation Board member Karen Hedlund will join Thomas Fryer (AB Rail) and Dan Schulte (Quandel Consultants) to speak about improving on-time-performance.
- A familiar face, Tim Hoeffner (now with Quandel Consulting), along with Nikkie Johnson (MDOT Passenger & Freight Development Manager), and Pasi Lautala (Michigan Tech Rail Program) will discuss funding opportunities in the infrastructure bill.
- FRA Deputy Administrator **Jennifer Mitchell** is the keynote speaker.

The Conference is a "hybrid" affair this year -- you can attend in person or virtually. **The registration page** accommodates both scenarios.

DRAFT PROGRAM HERE

REGISTER HERE

Amtrak Restores Daily Service on Four Routes

Citing an easing of personnel shortages and an increasing demand for both business and leisure travel, Amtrak **has resumed daily service** on four long distance routes that were curtailed earlier in the year. The four long-distance trains returned to daily running are the *California Zephyr*, the *Empire Builder*, *the Lake Shore Limited*, and the *Southwest Chief*. Still making just five round trips each week are the *City of New Orleans* and the *Crescent*. Three weekly departures continue for the *Cardinal* and the *Sunset Limited* as has been the case for several years. Closer to home, ***Hiawatha* service** between Chicago and Milwaukee has been operating a full schedule of seven daily trains (six on Sunday) since March 30, with an eighth northbound train on Fridays, as well as Thruway bus service to Fox Cities and Green Bay.

Durand Union Station Honored

Mary Warner-Stone is all smiles as she holds an $11,000 check presented by the **100+ Women Who Care** of the Greater Durand Area. The unique architecture of the **116-year old station** draws visitors to Durand from far and wide. The Railroad History Museum with its periodically changing displays, along with the Library and Archives, are valued resources for those interested in Michigan rail history. The DUSI staff supports the community by offering a unique space for meetings and special events, also mounting its own Christmas season events and supporting the annual Durand Train Days celebration. In the photo above, Mary, DUSI Director, is joined by Dan Brooks, DUSI Treasurer, and staffers Kevin Martin and Aidyn Loos in accepting this much-appreciated support.

THANK YOU DUSI STAFF AND SUPPORTERS
FOR KEEPING THIS HERITAGE ALIVE.

View from elsewhere . . .

"This new facility is the chance of a lifetime for our team of railroad experts and specialists. We took the best aspects of our old test loops and designed track not only capable of supporting today's rail industry, but also an ideal test bed for proving tomorrow's transportation innovations."

—MxV Rail Assistant VP-Operations, Shawn Vecellio, at ground breaking for **a new custom rail test loop** scheduled to open in September. The new facility is located just south of the Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TCCI), east of Pueblo CO. **Read here about other changes** taking place at the TTCI.

"Americans deserve a world-class rail system that allows people and goods to get where they need to go more quickly and affordably, while reducing traffic and pollution on our roads. We're proud to award these grants to improve passenger rail for riders and strengthen the freight rail that makes our supply chains and our economy work."

--USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg, **announcing $368 million in CRISI grants** for 46 passenger and freight rail projects in 23 states and the District of Columbia. Two Michigan shortline railroads will receive more than $30 million.

One Please. For The Queen.

HM Queen Elizabeth II visited the new London express line named in her honor prior to the May 24 opening. Here she is pictured at Paddington Station learning how to use the ticket kiosk. Sam Knight, **writing in *The New Yorker,*** describes the Elizabeth Line as "unexpectedly fantastic." More prosaic details of the line that will whisk riders 62 miles from Abbey Wood, southeast of London, to Heathrow in the west in half the time can be found **here** and **here**. *Photo @AndrewMatthews_PA*

Passenger 1 – full price
Passenger 2 – 15% off full price
Passenger 3 – 60% off full price
Passengers 4,5,6 – 70% off full price

Amtrak.com/ShareFares

MARP, Inc.
33373 Hampshire Road
Livonia, MI 48154-2952

Contact Your Lawmaker

Congressional Switchboard
202-224-3121
Sen. Debbie Stabenow
Sen. Gary Peters
Find Your Congressperson
Find Your State Senator
Find Your State Representative